

Between Module Course Reading

MODULE 3

Reading 1: Differentiating curriculum for gifted students (Sandra L. Berger)

Summary:

Differentiation is the key to extending gifted students. But the differentiation needs to be meaningful. Gifted students need in depth exploration of ideas and themes to stretch them not just, 'more of the same' to keep them busy.

A good curriculum should be intellectually demanding, to do this it must:

- Accelerate the mastery of basic skills.
- Engage students in active problem solving.
- Provide students opportunities for making connections with their knowledge.

7 points for good differentiation:

- Elaborate, complex and in depth study of major ideas.
- Develop productive thinking skills.
- Explore changing knowledge – foster love of pursuit of knowledge.
- Encourage selective use of appropriate resources.
- Include self-directed and self-initiated learning and growth.
- Understanding of self & relationships with others.
- Stress Higher Order Thinking skills.

Rationale:

- Curriculum needs to be differentiated - G & T comprehend complex ideas quickly, learn more rapidly, greater depth, and exhibit different interests.
- Time for in-depth exploration, manipulate ideas, provocative questions, and draw generalisations.

Content:

- Thematic
- Broad-based and integrative - not single subject learning
- Cross curricular - integrated understanding of knowledge

Product:

- To be consistent with learning style - give choice.
- Synthesize rather than summarise.

Management Strategies:

- Group interaction and simulations
- Flexible pacing
- Guided self-management

Principles:

- Accelerate mastery of basic skills
- Engage active problem-finding/solving
- Opportunities for making connections

Process:

- Abstract & complex thinking
- Stimulate and encourage Higher Order Thinking skills
- Challenging questions and open ended.

Learning Environment:

- Receptive
- Non-judgmental
- Student centered
- Inquiry and involvement
- Connect school to wider world
- Encourage to question, exercise independence
- Use creativity.

Reading 2: Differentiation For Gifted And Talented Students: Principles & Practices (Tracy Riley)

Summary:

- One size fits all curriculum fails those with individual learning needs.
- Variety of different learning needs including: learning style, rates of learning, activities, interests, expectations, motivation, outcomes, abilities, resources, reading skills, tasks & levels of parental support.
- Differentiation should be built on the individual knowledge of the pupil.
- Provision of alternative ways to explore the curriculum.
- Provision of array of processes to understand & own information.
- Provision for a number of different ways to demonstrate what has been learnt.
- There are a number of reflective questions a teacher needs to ask to ensure they are differentiating properly: *eg Do I focus on essentials? Do I celebrate individual differences? Do I facilitate student learning? Etc*
- Differentiation does not mean more of the same.
- Differentiation requires two questions of every lesson:
How do I ensure students obtain the knowledge?
How do I provide for those who already know?

Rationale:

- Seek and support individual differences - acknowledge and cater for them
- Recognise unique characteristics and behaviours.

Content:

- Abstract
- Complex
- Varied
- Organised around concepts
- Study of gifted
- Study of methods of inquiry.

Product:

- Variety
- Self-selected
- Appropriately evaluated
- Results of real problems
- Addressed to real audience
- Represents transformation of knowledge via originality

Management Strategies:

- Pre-test = novelty, complexity, acceleration and depth

Principles:

- *How do I ensure all children know it?*
- *How do I determine that all objectives have been met?*
- *How do I assess core knowledge, skills and concepts have been obtained?*
- *How do I provide for those who already have this Knowledge, skills and concepts - move beyond core curriculum?*
- *How do I allow a different path of learning? Expect different outcomes of learning?*

Process:

- Discover
- Open ended
- Metacognition
- Higher level thinking
- Choice
- Group interaction
- Pacing and variety

Learning Environment:

- **Not more of the same. Tailored.**

Reading 3: Differentiating instruction for advanced learners in the mixed ability middle school classroom (Carol Ann Tomlinson)

Summary:

There are many different needs in a classroom, therefore differentiation is important.

You should not provide extra work for gifted students.

Teacher as facilitator – ‘readiness based adjustments’

8 points of differentiating for advanced students:

- Concrete to abstract
- Simple to complex
- Basic to transformational
- Fewer facets to multi-facets
- Smaller leaps to greater leaps
- More structured to more open
- Less independence to greater independence
- Quicker to slower

Rationale:

- Differentiation = variety of learning options - not more of the same

Content:

- Understanding/sense making; not retention and regurgitation
- Active explorers

Product:

- Choice
- Voice in deciding how they will apply key principles being studied

Management Strategies:

- Multiple texts and resources
- Computer programs
- Interest centers - *what is this?*
- Learning contracts
- Compacting – *what is this?*
- Tiered sense making activities and products - *what is this?*
- Multiple intelligence orientation
- Complex instructions
- Group investigation
- Product criteria negotiated jointly by student and teacher - *what is this?*
- Graduated task and product rubrics - *what is this?*

Principles:

- Guide exploration
- On-going assessment
- Flexible groupings

Process:

- Adjustments based on learning profile - interest based adjustments

Learning Environment:

- Teacher to have clear rationale for differentiation
- Prepare students and parents for it
- Look at classroom structure and management - student centered
- Comfortable pace

Reading 4: Acceleration: An expanded vision (Lynne Mackenzie- Sykes)

Summary:

Accelerating advanced students has beneficial effects but the term 'accelerating' is often misunderstood.

Accelerating should refer to the rapid rate of a child's cognitive development (15 steps).

Evidence that acceleration has positive effects: increased learning efficiency, learning effectiveness etc

Acceleration can prevent educational frustration & boredom.

Social & emotional research shows that advancing a student's grade does not create the social & emotional problems associated with it.

There are many considerations to make when considering grade advancements:

- Psychological evaluation
- IQ of 130 or above.
- Child should be above age expected level.
- Socially & emotionally the child should be well adjusted.
- Physically in good health.
- Positive attitude of the parents.
- Receiving teacher should be enthusiastic about advancement.
- Advancement should occur at a natural transition point, (start of the year).
- Should be arranged on trial basis first.
- Avoid creating excessive expectations of grade advancement.

Rationale:

- Attitudes to acceleration to be challenged and changed
- Adopt accelerative programs and options

Content:

15 ways of acceleration:

- Early entrance to school
- Grade skipping
- Continuous
- Self-paced instruction
- Content or subject acceleration
- Combined classes
- Curriculum compacting
- Telescoping curriculum
- Mentorships
- Extracurricular programs
- Concurrent enrolment
- Advanced placement
- Credit by examination
- Correspondence courses
- Early entrance to senior school or uni

Product:

- Positive benefits noted

Management Strategies:

- Reorganize curriculum to ensure appropriate for gifted students
- Diverse teaching and learning experiences
- Peer interaction and discussion

Principles:

Grade skipping (List of 10 recommendations for it)

- Psychological evaluation
- IQ of 130 above
- Skills level above the mean
- Absence of serious adjustment problems
- Good health
- Parents positive attitude
- Receiving teacher positive attitude
- Advancement to coincide with natural transition points
- Trial basis
- Avoid creation of excessive expectations

Process:

- Match students educational needs ,facilitate development of study skills and independent
- learning, establish more realistic self-concepts and achieve motivation

Learning Environment:

- Teacher and school to positively support acceleration